

Preliminary Amendment
Appln. No.: National Stage of PCT/JP2004/017848
Attorney Docket No. Q94419

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): A composition

which comprises kenaf fibers and a poly(3-hydroxyalkanoate) (abbreviation: P3HA) produced by microorganisms and comprising a repeating unit represented by the formula (1):



in the formula, R represents an alkyl group represented by C_nH_{2n+1} with n representing an integer of 1 to 15.

2. (original): The composition according to claim 1,

wherein the P3HA is poly(3-hydroxybutyrate-co-3-hydroxyhexanoate) comprising a repeating unit of the above formula (1) with, in R, n = 1 and 3.

3. (original): The composition according to claim 2,

wherein the copolymer component composition ratio in the poly(3-hydroxybutyrate-co-3-hydroxyhexanoate) is 3-hydroxybutyrate/3-hydroxyhexanoate = 99/1 to 80/20 (mol/mol).

4. (currently amended): The composition according to claim 1 any one of Claims 1 to 3,

wherein the kenaf fibers account for 1 to 70% by weight and the P3HA accounts for 99 to 30% by weight based on the whole composition.

5. (currently amended): The composition according to claim 1~~any one of Claims 1 to 4~~, wherein the maximum fiber length of the kenaf fibers is not longer than 20 mm.

6. (currently amended): The composition according to claim 1~~any one of Claims 1 to 5~~, wherein the DSC curve drawn by differential scanning colorimetry shows an exothermic peak due to crystallization in the case that the temperature is lowered from a level higher by 30°C than the melting point of the P3HA alone at a rate of 10°C/minute, and the heat deformation temperature (T_h) of the P3HA alone and the heat deformation temperature (T_{h*}) of the composition comprising the kenaf fibers and the P3HA as determined for the respective samples prepared under the same conditions show the relation $T_{h*} > T_h$.

7. (currently amended): The composition according to claim 1~~any one of Claims 1 to 6~~, wherein the flexural modulus value, maximum bending strength value and IZOD impact value thereof are not lower than the corresponding values for a P3HA alone having a weight average molecular weight (M_w) falling within the range of $\pm 10\%$ of the weight average molecular weight (M_w) of the composition comprising the kenaf fibers and the P3HA, if the values are determined using the respective test specimens prepared using the same formulation and the same molding conditions.

8. (currently amended): An injection-molded product

which comprises the composition according to claim 1~~any one of Claims 1 to 7~~.

9. (currently amended): A film- or sheet-shaped molded product comprising the composition according to claim 1~~any one of Claims 1 to 7~~, or a press-molded product using the same.

10. (currently amended): A molded product

which comprises the composition according to claim 1~~any one of Claims 1 to 7~~,
the percentage of the area occupied by the kenaf fibers on the molded product surface
being not more than 50%.

11. (new): The composition according to claim 2,

wherein the kenaf fibers account for 1 to 70% by weight and the P3HA accounts for 99 to
30% by weight based on the whole composition.

12. (new): The composition according to claims 3,

wherein the kenaf fibers account for 1 to 70% by weight and the P3HA accounts for 99 to
30% by weight based on the whole composition.

13. (new): The composition according to claim 2,
wherein the maximum fiber length of the kenaf fibers is not longer than 20 mm.

14. (new): The composition according to claim 3,
wherein the maximum fiber length of the kenaf fibers is not longer than 20 mm.

15. (new): The composition according to claim 4,
wherein the maximum fiber length of the kenaf fibers is not longer than 20 mm.

16. (new): The composition according to claim 2,
wherein the DSC curve drawn by differential scanning colorimetry shows an exothermic peak due to crystallization in the case that the temperature is lowered from a level higher by 30°C than the melting point of the P3HA alone at a rate of 10°C/minute, and the heat deformation temperature (T_h) of the P3HA alone and the heat deformation temperature (T_{h*}) of the composition comprising the kenaf fibers and the P3HA as determined for the respective samples prepared under the same conditions show the relation $T_{h*} > T_h$.

17. (new): The composition according to claim 3,
wherein the DSC curve drawn by differential scanning colorimetry shows an exothermic peak due to crystallization in the case that the temperature is lowered from a level higher by 30°C than the melting point of the P3HA alone at a rate of 10°C/minute, and the heat deformation

temperature (T_h) of the P3HA alone and the heat deformation temperature (T_{h*}) of the composition comprising the kenaf fibers and the P3HA as determined for the respective samples prepared under the same conditions show the relation $T_{h*} > T_h$.

18. (new): The composition according to claim 4,
wherein the DSC curve drawn by differential scanning colorimetry shows an exothermic peak due to crystallization in the case that the temperature is lowered from a level higher by 30°C than the melting point of the P3HA alone at a rate of 10°C/minute, and the heat deformation temperature (T_h) of the P3HA alone and the heat deformation temperature (T_{h*}) of the composition comprising the kenaf fibers and the P3HA as determined for the respective samples prepared under the same conditions show the relation $T_{h*} > T_h$.

19. (new): The composition according to claim 5,
wherein the DSC curve drawn by differential scanning colorimetry shows an exothermic peak due to crystallization in the case that the temperature is lowered from a level higher by 30°C than the melting point of the P3HA alone at a rate of 10°C/minute, and the heat deformation temperature (T_h) of the P3HA alone and the heat deformation temperature (T_{h*}) of the composition comprising the kenaf fibers and the P3HA as determined for the respective samples prepared under the same conditions show the relation $T_{h*} > T_h$.

20. (new): The composition according to claims 2,

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wherein the flexural modulus value, maximum bending strength value and IZOD impact value thereof are not lower than the corresponding values for a P3HA alone having a weight average molecular weight (Mw) falling within the range of $\pm 10\%$ of the weight average molecular weight (Mw) of the composition comprising the kenaf fibers and the P3HA, if the values are determined using the respective test specimens prepared using the same formulation and the same molding conditions.